

## Article 14

### RESOLUTION TO BRING THE WAR DOLLARS HOME

Petitioner Ruth Hooke

#### **\*What does this Resolution do?**

The Resolution calls for a public discussion about the cost to our community of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan in relation to funding our local public needs. It calls on our federal representatives to take a strong stand against further funding for these wars and to support resolutions that prohibit any increase of troops in Afghanistan.

#### **\*Why this resolution now?**

According to the National Priorities Project, the people of Amherst have (as of September 30, 2010) collectively paid \$133.8 million in taxes for these wars since they began in 2001.

This amount could have locally funded for one year:

- \* 1,796 elementary school teachers OR
- \* 2,148 firefighters OR
- \* 1,955 police OR
- \* 12,941 military veterans receiving Veterans Administration care OR
- \* 45,094 households with renewable electricity (solar) OR
- \* 15,169 Head Start slots for children OR
- \* 11,225 scholarships for university students.

National Priorities Project: [www.nationalpriorities.org/costofwar](http://www.nationalpriorities.org/costofwar)

#### **\* Why should Amherst Town Meeting take a stand on a matter of federal policy?**

In recent Town Meetings, members have voted on cuts to local budgets for schools, libraries, public safety, social services and other public needs. We examine trends of declining state funding, but we do not discuss how the vast sums of federal money going to the wars puts a drain on the national economy, exacerbating our local budget crises.

#### **\*Where is the money coming from?**

Professor Andrew Bacevich in his recent book, *Washington Rules*, reminds us that the money we are spending on these wars is borrowed money, an astronomical debt we are off-loading on future generations.

#### **\*Will this Resolution deprive our servicemen and women in Iraq and Afghanistan of the support and weapons they need?**

We are asking that no MORE funding be voted for these wars. Our goal is to bring the troops safely home and to redirect the money spent on war to urgent domestic needs. The intent of the resolution is to stop further development of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Article 14 specifically refers to warfare creating “unnecessary harm...to U.S. military personnel and their families.” An orderly return of our service personnel is not limited in any way by this resolution.

**\*What about our veterans, thousands of whom are returning home with physical, psychological and/or cognitive traumas in need of urgent health care. Where will money to meet their needs come from?**

As the war dollars come home, more money could be reallocated to meet the tremendous needs of veterans, many of whom are not getting the services they need due in part to tight budgets at the Veterans Administration. (2010 Harvard study, “The Long-term Costs of Providing Veterans’ Medical Care and Disability” by Linda Blimes).

**\*What about the people of Afghanistan, particularly the women?**

According to her book, *Kabul in Winter: Life Without Peace in Afghanistan*, Ann Jones, journalist, humanitarian and aid worker in Afghanistan since 2002, life has not markedly changed for the majority of Afghan women since the invasion. Malalai Joya, an Afghan womens’ rights advocate and former Afghan parliamentarian, has said, “With the withdrawal of ... the occupation forces, it (will be) easier to fight against these internal fundamentalist enemies.... The longer the foreign troops stay in Afghanistan doing what they are doing, the worse the eventual civil war will be for the Afghan people.” (from her book, *Raising My Voice*).

**In summary**, Article 14 is intended to put our local financial priorities where they belong: on our educational services, medical care, housing, public services and infrastructure, where our true national security lies. **Demanding of our representatives to the national government that they “bring the war dollars home” is based on our belief that these wars are not protecting us or our local interests, but are instead squandering our resources in a manner that diminishes our security and corrupts our national purpose.**